CHAPTER VIII

THE BARRIO DWELLING

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The dwelling typical of the Catiougan barriofolk, the materials used, household furnishings, methods of construction, and the various associated beliefs and practices with the home are described in this chapter. The materials and style of the typical Philippine rural dwelling have not changed radically for centuries. In the early 17th century one observer wrote: "Their houses are built on four posts; their walls are of bamboo and thatch, and are very small."[1]

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The typical barrio dwelling (balay) in Catiougan is a one- or two-room pile structure from one to five feet above the ground. Walls are of bamboo and nipa palm leaves; the roof is thatched with nipa shingles or cogon grass. Although nails and wire are used, rattan lashing [335 is the usual means of fastening the timbers and shingles. In 1939 Philippine Census states that nearly 69 per cent 362 of the Filipinos lived in "light material" houses; 78 per cent of the inhabitants of Negros Oriental and 70 per cent of the people of Negros Occidental occupied such residences.[2]

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[1] Pedro De Sant Pablo, O.S.F., "Compulsory Service by the Indians," Blair and Robertson, op. cit., XIX, p. 72. This account was written in 1620.

[2] The Yearbook of Philippine Statistics: 1946, pp. 190-1.

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[369]

The higher percentage of people living in "light material" dwellings in Negros Oriental, in contrast with Negros Occidental, is explained partly by fewer and smaller urban settlements in the former province. Another factor is the cement or wooden dwellings furnished for sugar cane workers in Negros Occidental. In Barrio Caticugan 99 per cent of the people lived in "light material" dwellings; in the poblacion I estimated that 85 per cent of the dwellings were of bamboo and nipa. Before the war, however, there were more wooden tin-roofed houses in the poblacion; this was not the case in Caticugan. All of the "heavy material" houses in the poblacion were burned during the last war; only a few of them had been rebuilt by 1952.

MOUNTAIN HOUSES AND THE MATERIALS USED

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The transitional point in Siaton River valley between dwellings with pounded bamboo walls (sasa) and cogon-grass-thatched roofs, and the more typical bamboo-nipa and nipa shingled house occurs in Sitios Lamtok and Balanan. (See Plate VI, Page 42.) North of this area most houses have pounded bamboo walls and cogon-thatched-roofs, although there are some houses of the lowland type. Pounded bamboo walls and cogon grass roofs are not regarded as superior to materials used in Caticugan or the poblacion. These materials are used because of the distance from the nipa palm swamps along the seacoast. It is difficult to carry the large bundles of nipa back from the coastal area; at

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the same time an abundant supply of cogon grass is available--owing to the nearby kaingins--in the upper Siaton River valley. Residents in Caticugan reported that cogon grass is more inflammable than nipa and takes more time to thatch; no dwellings in Caticugan had cogon-grass-thatched roofs. Some houses had pounded bamboo walls; usually this wall type was used only for exterior kitchen walls since it is less inflammable.

Farther north in the Siaton River valley, such as in Apoloy, Olambid and Comon (sometimes called Goshen since Seventh Day Adventists have settled there) walls of many dwellings are made of bark peeled from trees. The bark of the lauan group--danlogan and balangobang--is considered best for house walls. These barks are softer and thicker than other hardwood barks.[3]

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A tree from six to ten feet in circumference is chosen for bark for house walls. The tree is cut so that one end is slightly elevated when it falls to facilitate removal of the bark. The trunk is then cut into segments of the length of the bark wanted for the walls. The outer bark ("dead bark" as it is called by the people) is carefully scraped from the trunk segments so not to injure the inner bark. When this process is completed the inner bark is pounded with a wooden club until sap appears on its surface; then a line is drawn along which it is cut. The

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[3]The danlogan is probably white lauan (Pentacme contorta Merrill and Rolfe) that is widely distributed in the Philippines, including Negros. Reyes, op. cit., pp. 309-10.

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bark now can be peeled easily from the trunk segments. This inner bark must be dried in the shade for several weeks before installation.

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The bark is nailed to the house framework or lashed with rattan. Nails make a neater walling and save time; small wooden discs are used to prevent the nail head from tearing through the bark. People who live in bark-walled dwellings often prefer them to nipa walling; they report that bark walls are cheaper, more durable and take less time to prepare. Bark walls, however, are typical only of dwellings near the forests, usually in pioneering communities opening new areas of interior farm land.

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In Siaton poblacion a few houses are built of "strong material," i.e., timber beams, wooden walls and floors, and corrugated iron roofs. The 1939 Philippine Census states that 4.6 per cent of the Filipinos then lived in "strong material" dwellings. These homes are usually inhabited by the principalia in Siaton and cluster near the plaza; before the last war the most elaborate houses surrounded the plaza. In these houses the typical split bamboo slat floor often yields preference to plank flooring. More "strong material" dwellings were found in Siaton poblacion before the last war; present high prices of materials makes the reconstruction of such houses costly.

INTERIOR FURNISHING OF THE BARRIO HOUSE

The typical Caticugan dwelling has two rooms--the sala or the living, dining bed-room, and kitchen. Sometimes the kitchen is completely separated from the sala but there may be only a partial partition. Some dwellings have a third room, a combined bedroom and storage space. Normally this room lacks beds and is used mainly to store boxes of clothing, sleeping mats, grain or other household equipment. Rarely do the "bedrooms" have windows; most barriofolk believe that night air is not healthy. In the poblacion many principalia shutter their bedroom windows when they retire; another reason is to discourage thieves. However, fresh air circulates through the loose walls and the slat floors.

In Caticugan the sala usually has a table and one or more wooden benches; sometimes benches of bamboo are fixed to the wall. Very few chairs occur in barrio dwellings although they are quite common in better houses in the poblacion. In two houses, one in Barrio Caticugan and the other in Naga, Singer sewing machines were seen. Most houses have a few pictures on the walls. The walls of the sala may be covered with colored illustrations from newspapers and magazines, mostly of American origin, and pictures of Filipino movie stars from the Cebuano-dialect magazine, Bisaya.[4]

[4] Bisaya is the most widely read dialect magazine in Siaton; it is a weekly, published in Manila, with a 1954 circulation of 2,973 in Negros Oriental. The magazine, first started in 1946, contains short stories, comics,

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What I have called "bedrooms" is something of a misnomer; "bedroom-storage" might be more appropriate. In no case was there more than one bed in such a room, although the family often consisted of five or six persons. At night sleeping mats were spread on the sala or kitchen floor to accommodate all the members of the family. Beds are raised bamboo platforms with a woven bamboo or rattan mesh over which is put the sleeping mat. Pillows are made of red cotton cloth or abaca fabric filled with kapok; the seeds are not removed. Women may have a few white cotton pillow cases for use when guests spend the night. Sleeping mats are rolled in the morning and placed in a corner of the room or sorted with the pillows in the rafters. There is a riddle on this activity:

In the morning they go up; at night they come down. What are they?

(Mabuntag mosaka, magabii manogpa. Unsa man?)

The answer is alugnan (the mats, pillows and coverings).

Two homes in Caticugan used hammocks of woven rattan as beds. The dwellings of the poblacion principalia normally have beds made either by local carpenters or purchased in Dumaguete; the beds have the same woven mesh over which sleeping mats are placed. The principalia normally sleep under mosquito nets--rarely seen in the barrio.

The space under the raised barrio house is called silong; here the plow, harrow, mortar and pestle, lumber, and firewood are stored. The nests of chickens may be

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tied to the house posts and the pig's trough is usually in the silong. In a few cases the silong was enclosed with a loosely woven bamboo grill. Many houses have small porches, most of them roofed, with bamboo benches; a few potted plants grow on the porch and the corn or rice grinders (galingan) are often kept there. (See Plates LIX and LX.)[1]

Two types of grinders are made from a grey granite. One is used to grind corn into meal (bugos mais) and the other to make flour rice for rice cakes (hinka).[9] Corn or rice kernels are dropped into the hole at the top of the grinder and ground between the teeth of the lower part of the mill. These grinders are gradually disappearing; most barriofolk take their corn (rarely rice) to the kerosene machine mills in the poblacion. I saw one corn grinder abandoned near a residence; the owner said she discarded it because their corn was ground in the poblacion.

Another device often seen in barrio dwellings is the kagoran that is used to shred coconut. The meat is rubbed against the iron shredder and collected below in a dish. Shredded coconut is mixed with a little water and squeezed by hand to make "coconut milk" used in preparing rice cakes and other foods. (See Plate LXI.)[2]

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[9] The same type of corn grinder is used by the Magahats. Oracion, op. cit., p. 85, Plate 56, illustrates the galingan (as also called by Magahats) for grinding corn. The Magahats evidently do not have the rice grinder used in Caticugan

1 (See p. 661 ff, cat. 412 or 116 -- Analyst)
2 (this plate is missing -- Analyst).

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The windows of the dwellings usually have shutters. There were no glass windows in the barrio; very few houses of the principalia in the poblacion had attractive translucent shell-paned windows. Shutters in both the barrio and poblacion are normally made of woven palm leaves and attached at the top to a bamboo pole, either with rattan or tin loops (made from a tin can) so they can slide open or shut. There was no electricity in the barrio; a few people owned Coleman lanterns. The most common method of illumination was the kerosene lamparilla that are made in Dumaguete. The wick, a spare rag, gives a weak and sooty light. (See Plate LXII.)

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After several years it is a constant job to keep a barrio dwelling in repair. New nipa shingles must be added, rents in the walls closed, and props placed to prevent a leaning dwelling from tumbling down. Rattan lashings of floor slats are replaced when they break and

new slats installed. A local riddle accurately describes 356
the general appearance of most of the Caticugan dwellings. 524

Since birth all patches. What is it? A house
(Sukad nabata tapak sanina. Unda ---? Balay)

COST OF BUILDING A BARRIO DWELLING

The basic materials used to build a barrio dwelling 435
are obtained in the locality, i.e., bamboo, nipa, house 178
posts, rattan, etc. Wire, nails, and galvanized iron 438
sheets are purchased in poblacion stores or, more frequent- 342
ly, obtained in Dumaguete. The use of wire, nails, iron
roofing and cement, for example, in the construction of
new dwellings in Caticugan, though still small, is increas-
ing. More families would have purchased these materials
during my residence except for highly inflated prices and
restricted supplies. This trend toward using materials
that are made and normally purchased outside the community
(in contrast to going to the mountains to obtain materials)
will continue to reduce the bartering that still persists
in their basic economy and decrease the barriofolk's self-
sufficiency.

In the past, a family who decided to build a new 476
dwelling in Caticugan were assisted by neighbors and 602
friends. Today, however, when an individual constructs a 178
new house it is mainly a family task. If additional labor 463
is needed the builder may hire local carpenters. House
construction exemplifies the transitional process--from
community cooperation, to family, and gradually to the

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assumption of certain skills by local specialists who are paid a cash wage.

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Table XXXVIII[1] illustrates the itemized costs of three different dwellings built in Caticugan in 1951.[10] House C's cost probably comes closer to the cost of the typical Caticugan dwelling than the other two dwellings. This house had two rooms--sala and kitchen--lacked wooden shutters, cement post supports, and little lumber was used. Table XXXIX[1] lists the items and cost of building a poblacion dwelling inhabited by a Siaton municipal official. No bamboo or nipa were used; the cost of the two dwellings illustrate the difference in dwellings between Caticugan barriofolk and Siaton principalia.

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The owner of House C did not hire any carpenters; he held a palihog that cost eight dollars. The work accomplished by palihog assistants could have been done in half a day by two laborers. The palihog, in this case, is an example of how "... the prestige factor inherent in the giving of a feast compensates for the lessened efficiency and the lower return."[11] While precise figures cannot be

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1 [See p. 667ff, cat. 435 or 342--Analyst]

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[10] Some men of Caticugan make extra money by working for lumber firms in Dumaguete. For example, a father and son in Barrio Caticugan were hired by one firm to cut first-class timber (salay, gisok, sambulawan, yakal, and amoning) in the mountains a day's walk from their home. They were paid eight cents per board foot with an additional two cents per board foot for bringing the lumber from Pinac-an (where they worked a permit issued to the Dumaguete lumber firm) to the poblacion. Another group of four men in Barrio Caticugan worked four days cutting lumber from felled trees in the nearby mountains; they earned a total of twenty-five dollars, or a daily wage of about one dollar and fifty-five cents. These were the only two groups hired to cut timber in Caticugan.

[11] Melville F. Herskovits, Economic Anthropology: A Study in Comparative Economics. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1952, p. 107.

TABLE XXXVIII

COST OF BUILDING THREE BARRIO DWELLINGS, CATICUGAN, 1951

Materials and Labor	House A		House B		House C	
	Amount	Cost ($)	Amount	Cost ($)	Amount	Cost ($)
Bamboo	130 poles	19.50	150 poles	25.50	100 poles	20.00
Nipa shingles	1000	15.00	1200	18.00	800	10.00
House posts	8	10.00	10	12.50	9	13.50
Sawn lumber	-	55.00	-	20.00	-	9.00
Rattan (pieces)	500	1.50	1000	2.50	1000	2.25
Wall materials	(12)	25.00	nipa	1.25	nipa	1.00
Nails	30 lbs	6.25	15 lbs	2.45	9 lbs	1.80
Wire	4 lbs	1.00	11 lbs	3.50	none used	-
Galvanized iron sheets	none used	-	1 sheet	1.25	none used	-
Window frames and shutters	-	-	(13)	5.00	-	-
Labor	(14)	25.10	(15)	10.13	(16)	8.00
Total Cost		$158.35		$99.08		$65.66

[12]The nipa walls were contracted for by the builder and were partially made of wood.
[13]Contracted to a carpenter by builder.
[14]Six carpenters worked for six days; five received fifty cents a day whereas the sixth carpenter was paid sixty-five cents. The owner fed the men two meals a day that he valued at 17-1/2 cents a day for each carpenter. The owner's son also worked with the carpenters.
[15]One carpenter worked for fifteen days for fifty cents a day plus two meals valued at seventeen and a half cents a day; the owner's two sons worked with the carpenter.
[16]Labor costs were palihog expenses: one goat, four dollars; guhang, one dollar and fifty cent; and other foods, two dollars and fifty cents. The palihog group spent three hours raising the house posts and inserting them in the holes.

20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines
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given, I estimate the typical Caticugan dwelling costs between fifty and a hundred dollars. Increased costs involve use of such materials as nails, wire, galvanized iron roofing, cement and iron straps for house posts, and lumber.

TABLE XXXIX

Cost of Building a Poblacion Dwelling, Siaton, 1951

Items	Amount	Cost (Dollars)
House posts (including hauling)	12 @ 5.33 each	64.00
Flooring (including hauling)	-	111.90
Walling and framing	-	878.37
Plywood for partitions	-	110.12
Galvanized iron sheeting	96 sheets @ 3.50 each	336.00
Roof nails and washers	-	8.85
Nails	-	56.42
Wire	2.2 pounds	.40
Cement	9 bags @ 2.00 each	18.00
Gravel	120 petroleum cans (5-gallon) @ 5 cents each	6.00
Sand	60 petroleum cans @ 5 cents each	3.00
Iron straps for house posts	30 @ 50 cents each	15.00
Shutters, doors, and windows	-	25.00
Labor	-	400.00
Painting	-	300.00
	Total Cost -	$2,333.06

The barriofolk said a typical bamboo-nípa dwelling lasts from twenty to twenty-five years. If the house posts are bamboo they must be replaced every six or seven years as must a nipa roof. Wooden posts usually last as long as the house.

best months in the year to begin a new dwelling; then it is easier to dig the deep post holes, and follows the first corn harvest, a period of less activity. Whether these factors really are involved is not known; none of the people cited them as reasons for selecting September. 335 777 787

The important requirement is to start construction of the house during a favorable month; building activities can continue during unfavorable months. One man, working on a new house in August, was questioned if this were wise since the month is unfavorable according to Napta. He replied that it was all right for he had raised the house posts in June--a favorable month.[19]

The construction of a barrio dwelling rarely continues without a break until the house is finished. Building activities often extend over a period of months. Posts may be erected and nothing done for a month until the family is able to buy or prepare materials for the framework and walls. Sometimes only the roof and kitchen walls are finished; one family was living in such a house in Talo-ot. In the poblacion another family began to purchase house posts and timber for a residence two years before actual construction began. Several Caticugan families lived in semi-completed dwellings for months. Often the kitchen is added long after the completion of the one-room dwelling; until then cooking is done under the house. 335 461 342

[19] One poblacion informant, a member of the principalia, said it was all right to begin construction of a house during June but if one did his children would grow up selfish. He also told how he once warned a Chinese merchant in the poblacion not to begin his house during an unfavorable month; the warning was not heeded and a few weeks after the house was completed it burned to the ground. The Chinese had fallen asleep while smoking; his opium pipe fell from his mouth and started the fire.

SELECTION OF A HOUSE SITE

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The same animistic concept that underlies saingin selection applies to selection of a house site. One must determine if the spirits approve or disapprove of the chosen location. The balisa is the most widespread method of selecting a house site in Caticugan; one might say that it kills two birds with one stone.

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To measure the correct distance between the four post holes (there may be more posts) four equal lengths of bamboo are prepared; a small hole is made in each end of each bamboo stick. The sticks are then arranged in a square on the ground and small pegs are driven through the holes, holding the square to the earth. Diagonals are then measured from northeast to southwest and southeast to northwest; if these diagonals are the same length this is deemed a favorable sign from the spirits. However, if the spirits object to a dwelling on that spot, no matter how carefully the bamboo square is made the diagonals will never be equal. The site is usually abandoned or the process repeated until a favorable response is obtained. The balisa has a practical aspect for if the diagonals are equal then the bamboo square has located the four post holes.

One Naga informant explained how he selected his house site in 1950. Questions in () I asked during the interview.

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I got a stick six feet long and split it into two pieces. I placed one part in the place where I wanted to build the house and said to myself: [loud enough so the spirits could hear] 'I will put this stick here and I have another stick of the same length that I shall sleep with tonight. I shall measure the two sticks tomorrow; if they are of the same length I will build my house here. If not, I shall look for another place. So while I sleep tonight you [the spirits] let me dream if you want me to build my house here or not.' When I went to sleep that night I slept with the stick. The next morning I measured the two sticks; and they were the same length so I built my house here.

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I also buried a green coconut, one that when you shake it you cannot hear the water inside. I let it stay in the ground all night and the next morning I dug it up. I shook it but I could not hear the water. According to the old people, all omens were good. If I had heard the water when I shook the coconut the old men say the site would be a hot one. (What do you mean by 'hot'?) I do not know what they mean by hot; I just follow what the old people say. (Did you have a dream the night you slept with the stick?) No, that is why I decided to build my house here.

~~Other people said the coconut remains buried for one week.~~

Often the balisa may be accompanied by other practices to determine whether the spirits object. One family, two days after holding a favorable balisa, put a small cross in what would be the center between the four post holes of the proposed house. A loop of sig-id vine (rattan is also used) about 6 feet long was put on one arm of the cross. The next morning the vine was measured and it was found to be the same length. This was interpreted as an omen that the spirits approved of the site. If the vine had been shorter or longer than 6 feet this would have been an unfavorable sign from the spirits. An almost identical method of selecting new house sites exists among the Magahats. A cross is put in the site and a vine hung

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on it; two days later the owner returns. If he is able to separate the vine, without a break, in two parts the site is a favorable one.[20]

Another method of selecting a house site is to mark a square on the ground on the proposed site. A cross and as many stones as there are members in the family are put inside this square. If some of the stones are missing the next morning this is an unfavorable omen. One family in Talo-ot repeated this method three times until finally the same number of stones were at the base of the cross as were put there the evening before. The spirits appear to be amenable to persistence and doggedness on the part of humans.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE DWELLING

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The first step in the actual construction of a new dwelling is to dig the post holes. A blunt iron-pointed digging stick (gabok) is used to loosen the dirt that is scooped out of the hole with one's hands or a coconut shell. When the hole becomes so deep that it is difficult to reach the bottom the songsong is employed. The songsong is a sturdy bamboo whose end is split in many places; when pounded into the loose dirt these ends flare outward and the earth is packed inside. The songsong is then withdrawn from the hole and the dirt shaken out.

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[20] Oracion, op. cit., pp. 21-2. The same method of locating the four post holes, as described by the balisa, is also used by the Magahats; however, it does not appear to have any supernatural purpose.

When the holes[1] are dug, the posts are laid beside them. Their tops point in a particular direction, depending on the month. Napta states that for January, February and March the posts must face the northeast, for the following three months the southwest, for the next three months to the east and for the last three months toward the northeast. The directions correlate with the southwest and northeast monsoons. This custom is to prevent accidents to the house such as fire or flood. 335 189 777

Some informants said that the tops of the posts should be pointed with the wind. Two dwellings in Caticugan were begun in June and the posts were pointed toward the southwest before they were placed in their holes. Sometimes the post ends are charred to prevent termites from eating the wood after it is in the ground.

Putting heavy posts in their holes appears to be one of the few occasions for a palihog; several palihogs were witnessed in Caticugan for this task. In one case friends and neighbors of one man were invited to help him and his son put posts in holes already dug. Eight men came; when they finished the job, which took about an hour, they ate a meal prepared by the owner. After the meal the men went home but not until some of their wives and children also had come to eat. 335 574 476

There are different ways of erecting bamboo house posts. (See Plate LXIII.)[2] Since bamboo rots quickly in the ground a few barrio houses had bamboo house posts that rested on stone foundations. In one case short 335 342

20: Hart E-5 (195-) 1954 OA1 Philippines ~~OA~~
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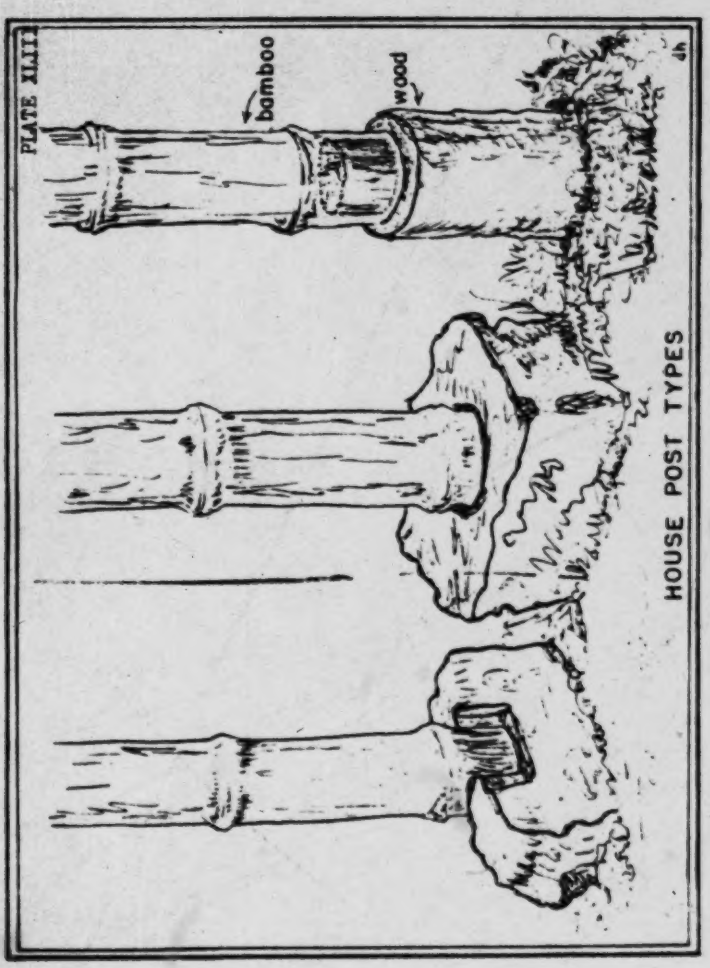

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wooden posts were put in the holes and cut so they fitted inside the larger bamboos that supported the house. In this manner the bamboo posts did not enter the earth. These techniques of preparing bamboo house posts, however, are not widespread since wooden posts are normally used.

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Before the house posts are erected, various items are put in the holes; this practice is followed by nearly all barriofolk. Table XL[1] indicates items placed in the holes and the reasons for so doing. Magahat men chew betel nut and lime and spit red saliva into the post holes: "This procedure is to show respect to the spirits of the place."[21] Spanish coins are considered superior to contemporary Philippine coins, although the latter are used if the former are unavailable. One builder purchased Spanish coins from a neighbor for his post hole ceremony.

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As in most of these practices to honor or placate the spirits, the combination of items vary but a "core" is accepted by nearly all people. The "stock" items are tilala, kalipay, mik, damolmog, gabigabi, and the pieces of a broken frying pan. It is desirable but not necessary to have an adequate number of each item so one may be put in every post hole. One woman spent an afternoon collecting items for the post hole ceremony; the new house had six posts. She was unable to obtain all items in sixes. The items were dropped into the holes, beginning with the northeast hole, in a counter-clock-wise fashion; the ceremony was done quickly by the woman with no religious

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[21] Oracion, op. cit., pp. 22-3.

1 [See p. 678 cat. 335, 342, 789, or 777 -- Analyst]

20: Hart E-5 (195.) 1954 OA1 Philippines ~~OA~~
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TABLE XL

ITEMS USED IN POST HOLE CEREMONY
FOR A NEW DWELLING
CATICUGAN, 1951

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Items	Purposes
1. Small lagit (live) stones from river rapids.	1. To prevent fire; to protect the house from strong winds so the dwelling will not be carried away as the stones are not washed away in the river rapids; to make the house posts last longer; to make occupants happy while living in the house; to make them have a "watery, cold mind," i.e., not quick to anger.
2. Tilala leaves (Cordyline fruticosa A. Chev).	2. So the spirits will not be surprised when they see people living in the new dwelling.
3. Kalipay leaves. (Kalipay means "happiness").	3. So household members will always be happy and courteous when visitors come.
4. Mik (Spanish coins) or Philippine coins; salt is sometimes used as a substitute.	4. To prevent termites from destroying the house posts; so members of the family will not be sickly.
5. Damolmog (a green river moss) and gabigabi, an underwater river plant.	5. So the house will not burn. The connection is that these two plants are always under water.
6. Palito leaves.	6. So household members will always be happy and contented.
7. Any type of flower.	7. Same purpose as kalipay and palito.
8. Pieces of a broken frying pan.	8. To make the house strong; to make the occupants of the house live harmoniously, to sleep peacefully in the house.

TABLE XL (Continued)

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Items		Purposes
9. Beads from the dumdum necklace. (Dumdum means "to remember.")	9.	So household members, if they move, will never forget their home and return some day.
10. Kaboy leaves	10.	So household members will always be kind to visitors.

overtones. This is the common practice but no one could explain why the northeast hole was selected or a counter-clock-wise movement appropriate.

Framework Construction

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The accompanying drawing of a barrio dwelling represents a little better type than is typical for Caticugan as a whole. (See Plate LXIV.)[1] Most houses do not have wooden shutters, the porch usually is not as elaborate, and posts normally are wood instead of bamboo. Basically, however, the sketch represents the average Caticugan dwelling. Some houses were more huts than dwellings, raised only a foot from the surface, with one small room. Only one house in the barrio had wooden walls; this dwelling belonged to the most affluent resident of the community.

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After the posts have been placed in their holes, a plumb line is used to get them straight. Then earth is tamped around them so they are firmly fixed. If bamboo posts are used braces, pelepol, (Plate LXIV, 2)[1] may be added to strengthen the uprights. Only two houses in

1 [See p. 680, Cat. 342 -- Analyst]

BARRIO RESIDENCE

• Legend •

1. Post
2. peltepal
3. bangon
4. hanlag
5. kerdezo
6. hagdan (ladder)
7. marko (palobo)
8. Layanglayang
9. soleg
10. silik (nipa)
11. atop (nipa)
12. bobong (bamboo)
13. sandayong
14. balakanan
15. bongbong
16. obay-obay
17. brandilla
18. pasamano
19. da-og
20. fensa

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20: Hart, E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippinds
Central Bisayan OA14

Caticugan had cement forms to which wooden house posts were bolted by iron straps embedded in the concrete. The cost of cement, made in nearby Cebu Island, was so high in 1951-52 that few families could afford to buy several sacks when building a new house.

After the posts have been installed a temporary bracing (dalamba)--the same term used for fish corral bracing--is lashed to the posts on which barefoot workers stand while building the roof. Once the bracing is finished holes are bored in the upper portions of the posts to insert pegs (tarogos) that support the rafter beams. (See Plates LXV, 30, and LXV-A.)[1]

Rafter beams are normally lashed with rattan. The barriofolk tend to use nails or nuts and bolts to fix the various rafters when wood and not bamboo is used. Rattan, however, is still more popular and cheaper.[22]

After the pegs are fixed in the posts, the sablayan (Plate LXV, 22) and balabag (Plate LXV, 28)[1] rafter beams are added and lashed in place with rattan. The "heads" or larger ends of the bamboo sablayan and balabag should

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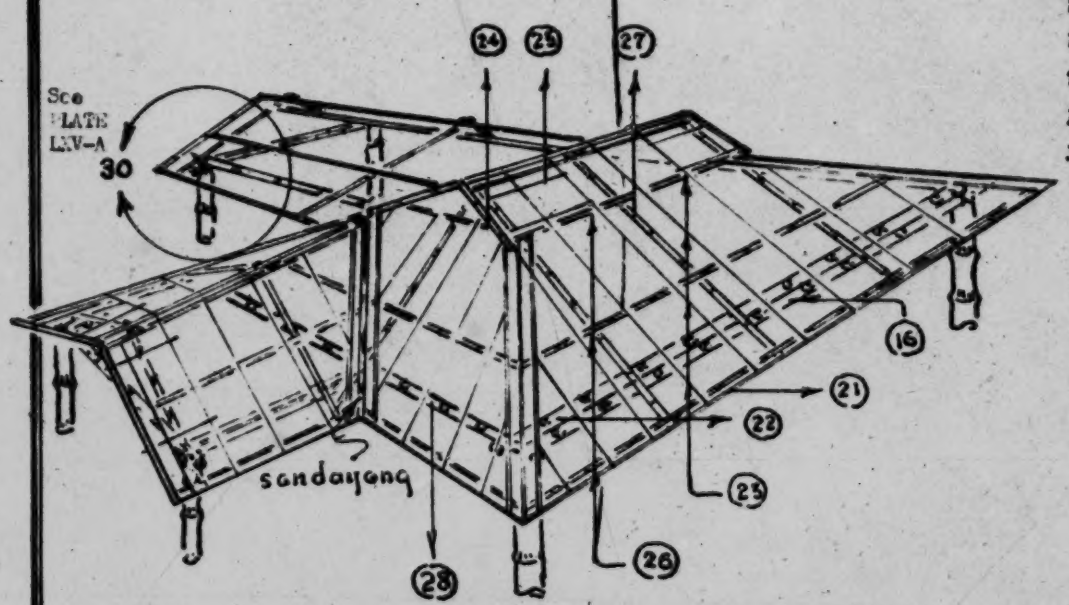
[22] Barriofolk may gather their rattan (oway) in the mountains or buy it. Rattan gathered for house construction, is cut in lengths about 12 feet long. There are many names for different varieties of rattan, usually based upon their use. Manamao, Malabagakay, tagalola and malabutong rattan varieties are normally used in house construction. Tagalola is the rattan employed to lash the bamboo floor slats. Palasan and tagsa-on, thicker varieties, are used in making rope, e.g., to tie the goats or carabaos. Abangan, a thick variety, is not suitable for rope-making owing to the deep notches in the stem; it may be used as the anchor rope for bobo. Tagakan is rarely gathered because it is brittle "even when green" according to my informants. Homokan is used to make the woven seats of chairs or beds. Another variety of rattan, tagiti, the narrowest in diameter is used for a variety of purposes.

1 [See p. 682, cat. 335 or 116 -- Analyst]

PLATE LXV

ROOF TRAMING
(pamalay)



legend
21. pasposanan
22. sablayan
23. katsau
24 laylayang (1)
25. Liligan
26. hawak
27. salagonting
28. balabag
29. pinsud
30. tarogo

20: Hart E-5 (1954.) 1954 OA1 Philippines Cat.
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should point either east or south. The reasons for this custom have been forgotten; some speculated that maybe it was because when one floats bamboo down the river the larger ends point south. If rafters are made of timber instead of bamboo it is impossible to determine the "head" and people ignore the custom. 335 789 777

The next step is to install the abay-abay (Plate LXIV, 16) that strengthen the sablayan and balabag; however, if timber is used the abay-abay are omitted. The roof framework (panalay) consists of a number of vertical and horizontal slats to which the nipa shingles (atop) are lashed. First the salagonting (Plate LXV, 27) then the hawak (Plate LXV, 26) and finally the katsaw (Plate LXV, 23) are added to the roof framework. The thickest end of the bamboo salagonting must be at the peak of the roof; otherwise it is believed the occupants will always be sickly. The katsaw should always alternate so the occupants will not suffer from nightmares. The hawak, that run the length of the roof, are tied under those that run the opposite direction; this is done to make it easier to add new nipa shingles. 335 342 [789 777]

Nipa shingles cost from ₱1.25 to ₱1.50 per 100 in Siaton. Nipa swamp owners not only sell shingles in the nearby barrios but also send them to Dumaguete. The Siaton bus often stopped along the road, just outside the poblacion, to pick up large bundles of nipa shingles that the owner was taking to Dumaguete. Some go to a nipa swamp and cut the leaves to make one's own shingles, paying 435 438

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the owner for the material. This is cheaper than buying the shingles ready-made.

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Shingles are made of strips of leaves "sewed" with rattan to a narrow bamboo slat. The leaves are doubled over the bamboo and rattan is interwoven below the stick to keep the leaves in place. Plate LXVI[1] illustrates how the shingles are attached to the roof; a nipa roof lasts from six to seven years. The barriofolk normally replace the rotted nipa shingles by twos and threes rather than reroof the entire dwelling; new shingles are added just before the start of a rainy season.

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When the roof framework is finished the roof is shingled. The first step is to put shingles on the silik (Plate LXIV, 10), the roof ridges. Before the first shingle is placed on the silik, a kapia snail shell and some river moss are placed under the shingle. As one informant explained:

> In putting on shingles I put a kapia and river moss under the first one. In doing this I say to myself: 'I'll put this kapia here as a lihi so during strong winds the roof won't be destroyed. And I am putting moss here so my house will not be destroyed by fire.'

Another informant said kapia shells are used because "they are very hard to pry off the rocks in the river." Some added a few leaves found floating in the river to serve the same purpose as the river moss.

Many barriofolk consider it unwise to cut rattan by biting it when making the first tie in building a dwelling. One Naga informant told me:

1 [See p.685, cat. 342 or 116 -- Analyst]

PLATE LIVI
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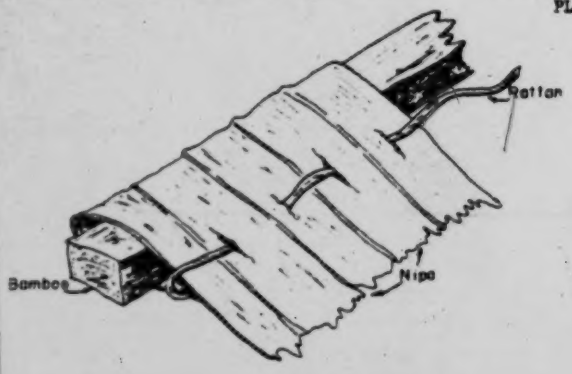

CONSTRUCTION OF NIPA SHINGLE
(actual size)

METHOD OF ATTACHING SHINGLE TO ROOF

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In the first tie of the house with rattan one must be careful not to bite the rattan or else the old people say the house will have many kinds of insects. Maybe they are right. The first house I built I happened to bite the rattan the first time I started to tie; there were plenty of mosquitos in this house, especially during the rainy season. In building this house [the informant's dwelling at the time] I was careful not to bite [the rattan] and there are not many insects, especially mosquitos.

The imitative magic principle is apparent; if one "bites" the rattan the completed house will have many insects that will "bite" the occupants. After the silik is finished, shingles are fixed to the remainder of the roof. Then the bamboo bobong (Plate LXIV, 12) are put along the roof ridges and the da-og (Plate LXIV, 19) added; sometimes the bobong is made of tin. The da-og strengthen the roof and prevent shingles from being blown off during a strong wind.

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When the roof is finished, the floor (salag) framework is begun. (See Plate LXVII,)[1] First pegs are inserted to support the floor beams that may be either bamboo or timber. The bangon are installed after the bamboo hanlag (bosa-og if made of wood) have been put in place. The floor is made of bamboo slats one-half an inch wide and one-fourth an inch apart; the slats are smoothed with the bolo and then either nailed or lashed to the liligan. Such a floor makes a dwelling cooler during the hot season and easier to clean than a solid flooring.

The framework for the door and shutters are now made. The door is usually made of woven strips of bamboo with "hinges" of strong rattan, or fixed to slide in

1 [See p. 687, cat. 342 or 335 Analyst]

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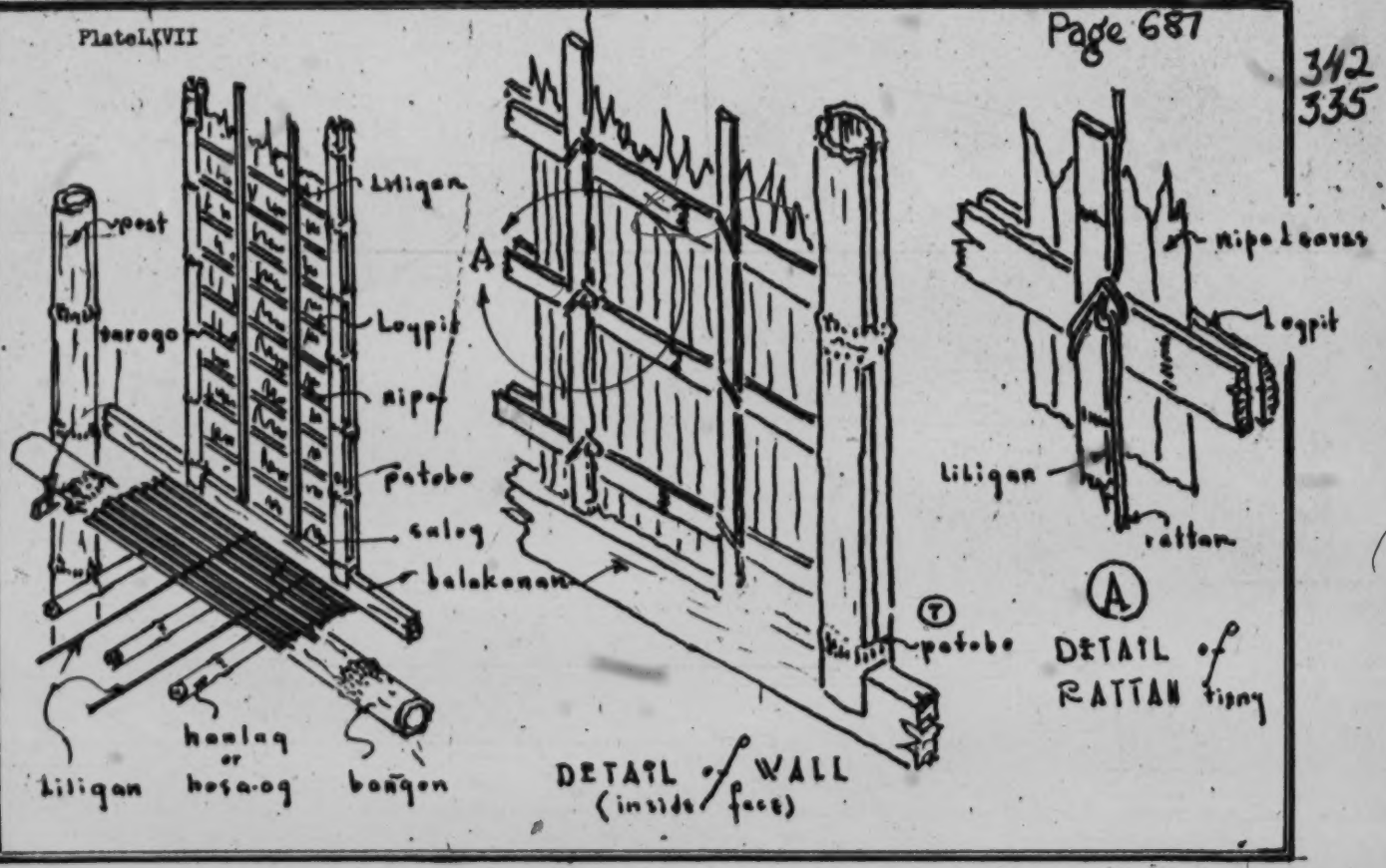

20. Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines Central Bisayas OA14 Pg 687

grooves. The shutters (takop or sira) are made normally of nipa or buri palm leaves. In some cases the shutters are wooden. 335 342

A general belief is that it is best for the doorway to face either the east or north; most of the Caticugan dwellings do. However, the barrio chapel has two doors, one facing south and the other west, and a group of houses along the base of the Dangola bluff doorways facing south. Some of these houses are unfinished; the owners eventually plan to have either an east or north doorway. In the poblacion, with its grid street system, there is no attempt to follow this custom. 335 342 789 777 [77]

Barriofolk state that the old people (gulang) thought it wise to have the doorway face either east or north so one's life will always be "rising like the sun" or because rain usually comes from the southwest or west. If the doorway opens to the south or west the occupants of the house will be sickly, not alert during their sleeping hours, or their lives "always setting like the sun does in the west." One informant, whose statement was not backed by the majority of the people, said it was necessary to have the door facing the east or north for otherwise when entering the house "one will go against the 'heads' of the sablayan and balabag."[23]

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[23] Oracion states: "Most houses in the coastal barrios and towns...are constructed so that the main door and stairs face east. This is believed to bring prosperity to the occupants. If the main door entrance faces west, it is believed that the occupants will get sick and may die." Oracion, op. cit., p. 25.

House Wall Types

Besides wood there are three types of house walls in Caticugan. Bamboos are pounded until they are quite flat; they are then cut along one side, spread out and lashed or nailed as walling (sasa). A second type of walling, siklat, is a loose basket weave of thin pieces of bamboo. These two types of walls are often built around the kitchen since they are less inflammable than nipa. The most common type of exterior house wall is nilogpit that is made of nipa. (See Plates LXVII and LXVIII.)[1] The vertical patobo (Plate LXVII, 7) have slits in their sides into which thin pieces of bamboo (logpit) are inserted. Nipa leaves are placed between the logpits and then tied to the liligans. Sometimes wire is used to lash the liligans and nipa instead of rattan.

The next step is to install the partitions (salud) if the dwelling is to be divided into rooms. The earth hearth is built and the altar (artal) constructed. A shelf (pantaran), that often extends outward from the kitchen wall, is made for the large clay water jar. A bamboo ladder is built to climb to the doorway.

Barriofolk said some changes in their dwellings have occurred since the "old days." In the past the roof was steeper, there was no porch or balcony, nor wooden shutters that slide in grooves. Bamboo floor slats were never nailed but always tied with rattan and no cement, wire, or bolts were used. As for furnishing there were no clay pot rests (hornos), mirrors, chairs or chinaware;

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1 [See p. 687 4. cat. 342 or 335--Analyst]

PLATE LXVIII

DETAIL - A
SIKLAT EXTERIOR WALL

DETAIL - A
NILOGPIT TYPE

EXTERIOR HOUSE WALLINGS

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20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines
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basins were made of wood instead of the tin ones used today. No one had Coleman lanterns for light.

HOUSE-WARMING CEREMONY

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When a new dwelling is finished it is customary to hold a novena to bless the house and its occupants; during the ninth (and last) evening of the novena a taktak ug bokbok occurs. When the prayers are over, the guests jump up and down on the floor "to make the destructive bokbok beetles fall to the ground." Some smoke rattan lashings with the sap of the salngan tree or soot from a lamp as a termite preventative.

No taktak ug bokbok was held during my visit; the dwelling must be completed. In Talo-ot, for example, one family had been living in their house for more than a year but the kitchen was unfinished. The "house warming" was not held "because our house is not finished. We must wait."[24]

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If visitors sleep in a dwelling the first night it is occupied they must continue to sleep in the house for

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[24]A story is reported from Guindulman, Bohol, of the young married couple who moved into a new dwelling. The husband's mother-in-law advised them to eat meagerly the first three days in their new house. Only four bananas were to be cooked and eaten, one each for the husband, wife, maid and the last banana to be put in the cupboard. "'The ordeal is called a lihi,' Pemyong the husband explained. 'It sets a sort of pattern for frugal living. The limited meal of one banana and one pata [a salted black fish caught in the river] would remind us to economize always. The extra banana represents our savings which will accumulate through the years and make us rich.'" Joan Fernandez, "How to Get Rich," The Philippines Free Press, XLIII, No. 36 (September 6, 1952), pp. 22-3. This custom is unknown in Caticugan.

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three consecutive nights. If this is not done the occupants will be plagued with misfortune and illness.

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Some house posts have white crosses painted on them as protection against harmful spirits. A few houses had placed under the entrance ladder a small cross made of a thorny wood (salay). The barriofolk explain that this custom of painting or putting crosses on or near their homes originated shortly before the last war. Tales of a "headless" nun who brought typhoid came to southern Negros from Cebu. This supernatural nun was said to visit a dwelling and call out, "Good evening." If any occupants answered her before the greeting was repeated three times one of the family became ill of typhoid and died. To protect themselves the people started to paint crosses on the posts or to erect one near the house entrance. Houses so "protected" were avoided by the "headless" nun who also did not trouble people with the family name of Cruz (cross).

When these tales reached southern Negros some people in Siaton were said to have built crosses as thick as a man's leg. Even today some people will not answer a "good evening" greeting from a visitor outside their house until it is repeated three times. There is a parallel here with the Spanish custom that once required Filipinos to introduce themselves three times to Spaniards before they were recognized.

[11]